

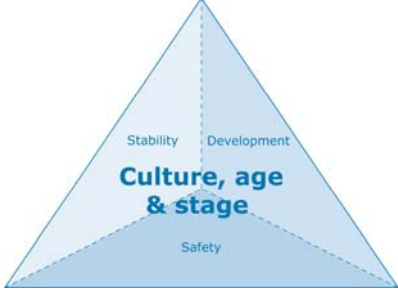
Developing a framework for development, reflective supervision and support human services

Early Years Seminar Series:
Research to Policy to Practice
17th March 2014, Parkville

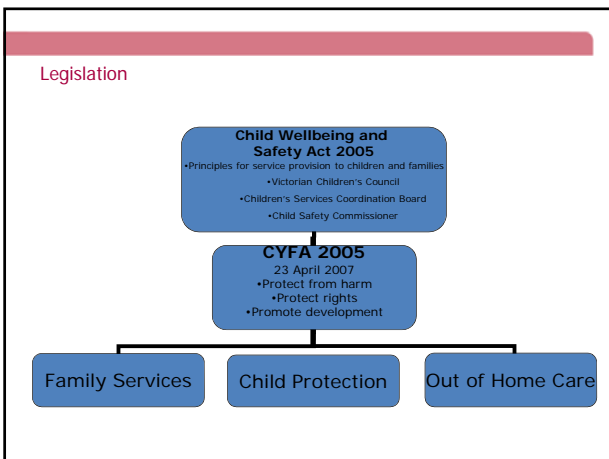
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The Best Interests Principles
Child Protection decisions must protect the child from harm, protect his/her rights and promote his/her development



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Refocussing Child Protection

Shift from an episodic focus on immediate safety and 'minimal intervention into family life' to a broader focus on:

- child development and children's stability
- keeping Aboriginal children connected to their community and culture

'the need, in relation to an Aboriginal child, to protect and promote his or her Aboriginal cultural and spiritual identity and development by, wherever possible, maintaining and building their connections to their Aboriginal family and community' (s.10).

New functions and processes:

- reports on unborn children
- reports on children 10-14 exhibiting sexually abusive behaviour

The Legislation

- The CYFA states (s.10) the **best interests** must always be paramount when making a decision, or taking action with regard to a child.
- *'the need to give the widest possible protection and assistance to the parent and the child as the fundamental group unit of society and to ensure that intervention into that relationship is limited to that necessary to secure the safety and wellbeing of the child.'* (s.10.3.a)
- Included in these principles is section 10(3)(e) *which must consider 'the effects of cumulative patterns of harm on a child's safety and development'*.
- The grounds for statutory intervention when a child is in need of protection do not change.....
- Section 162(2) determines that: *'the harm may be constituted by a single act, omission or circumstance or accumulate through a series of acts, omissions or circumstances'*

Embedding critical reflection: the challenge

Promoting a culture across sectors that values research and critical reflection to improve outcomes for children and families, in a context of growing demand and high risk.

Victorian child protection culture and management was 'low in emotional capital and high on task completion and compliance'.

Judith Gibbs, 2009

A consistent theme throughout the BICPM publications is that a culture of critical reflection is crucial so that professionals: 'can be astute to the possibilities for change; *think* about what they are observing, reflect on *how they are feeling* about the dilemmas; experience support; have robust debate; integrate relevant theory and research; draw on the practice wisdom of their colleagues and not become stuck and biased in their views'

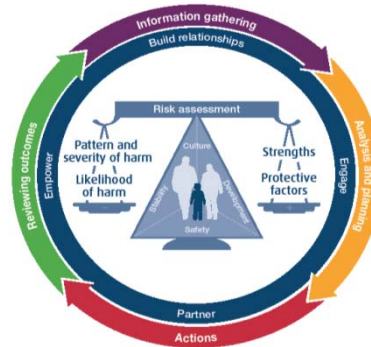
Miller 2010

Embedding change: Principal Practitioner Role

Initial Brief:

- Build a culture of reflective practice
- Bridge policy, research and practice
- Conduct reviews of practice for Minister, Executive, Ombudsman, Regional mngs
- Strengthen partnerships with external stakeholders
- Develop innovative practice

Best interests case practice model



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Embedding change

- Central and regional training and workshops
- specialist practice positions
- regular reflective practice sessions
- post graduate training which has been taken up by over 300 professionals in child protection and family services in the past 5 years.

Specialist practice resources



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Nothing new

'... the challenge which confronts Community Services Victoria is that of creating a climate wherein individual practitioners can be encouraged to engage in what Kemmis terms "a collaborative exchange of learning". When such a body of knowledge is developed around reflective practice then might Victoria's child protection teams become a more effective force for the protection of children'

Robin Clark (1988),

Specialist practice resources



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Practitioner Field Tool

Child and Family Snapshot

Child's name: _____ Child's age: _____ Date: _____

Safety	Stability	Development
<p>These simple tools can be used creatively with parents and children to gather an understanding of their worries and their strengths. Detail the content on the 'headline' boxes so that everyone understands what our focus is. Think historically and synthesise the information you have gathered into simple language that is both clear and family sensitive. Avoid jargon and make sure that it is meaningful for the children and the parents/caregivers.</p> <p>It is only a point in time 'snapshot' summary, but if you review and complete the tool at different points in time, it will create an opportunity to notice and reiterate success and change, or highlight the need to respond differently. Listen to the family's story and respect their pace, while not losing sight of the concerns about the children. The focus on outcomes for the children and family enables reflection on what needs to happen next and with what degree of urgency.</p> <p>The family meeting tool can be used as a prompt to guide discussion. Key themes can be summarised under the headings during family meetings, case conferences and care team meetings.</p> <p>In supervision or reflective practice sessions, it could be used to clarify the goals and the 'where to from here' tasks, under the headings of safety, stability and development.</p> <p>A copy of this snapshot should be recorded on OHS or CRSSS. This page can be accessed by downloading it from the everychild everychance website at www.everychild-everychance.gov.au/</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Emotional Social 	<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to primary caregiver Connection to family Connection to school and friends Connection to community Connection to culture 	<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and growth Education and learning Social, Emotional and behavioural

Simple Guide to Genograms

A genogram or family tree is a useful tool to gather information about a young person's family. The visual representation of a family can help you to identify patterns or themes within families that may be influencing or driving the young person's current behaviour.

Most young people really enjoy this opportunity to talk about their family history, and it can work as a good tool to build trust and rapport in a working relationship. However, be aware that some young people may find seeing a visual picture of the state of their relationships confronting, particularly if the majority of relationships in their life at present are conflictual or distant. Use the tool carefully and in cases where you think it will be useful to help promote healthy change and the development of more positive relationships in the young person's life. A copy of this genogram should be recorded on OHS or CRSSS!

With the young person:

- Aim to gather information about at least three generations: the young person's generation, their parents and their grandparents.
- Include significant others who lived with or cared for the family.
- Start with drawing the family structure, who is in the family, in which generations, how they are connected, birth/marriage, death etc.
- You may wish them to tell you a bit about each person.
- As the young person tells you about family members and relationships, make a note alongside the name:
 - Ask about relationships between family members:
 - Who are you closest to?
 - What does your relationship like with...?
 - How often do you see...?
 - Where does... live now?
 - Is there anyone here who you really don't get along with?
 - Is there anyone else who is very close in the family? Or others who really don't get along?
 - Ask about characteristics or habits of family members, particularly those relevant to your role: health issues, alcohol/drug use, physical and mental health, violence, contactable with the law, employment, education.
 - Ask about family values, beliefs and traditions.
 - Try to explore patterns and themes:
 - Who are you most like?
 - What is... like? Who else is like that?
 - Did anyone else have home work? Is anyone else interested in... art, etc?

Symbols for drawing the genogram or family tree

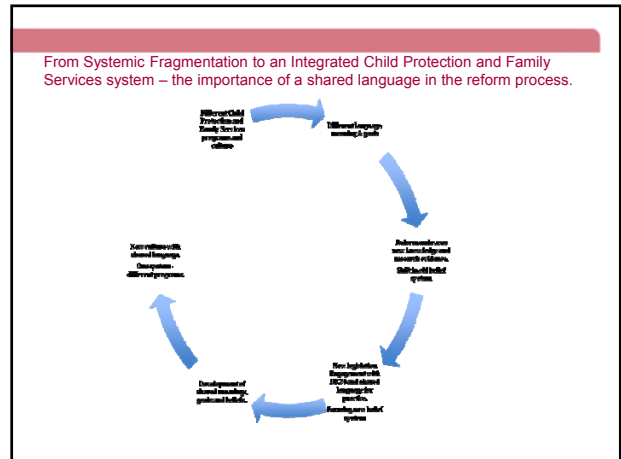
- Female symbol - name, age
- Male symbol - name, age
- Unlabeled gender
- Married - add the year or ages
- Daughter relationship - commencement date or ages
- Separation - date or ages
- Divorce - date or ages
- List children in both order and get names and ages either within the symbol or underneath.
- Death - a small cross in the corner of the symbol (second class if forced currently, for example, who the young person is living with)
- Conflictual relationship
- Very close
- Distant relationship

everychild everychance
Department of Human Services
Victorian Government

Child and Family Snapshot

Child's name: _____ Child's age: _____ Date: _____

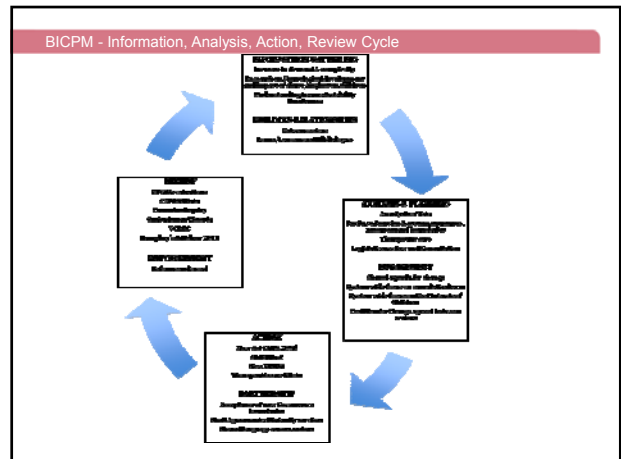
Safety	Stability	Development



Child and Family Snapshot

Family name: _____ Date: _____

Concerns	Strengths	Future picture	Constraints	Next steps
What are we worried about?	What is already happening to keep the children safe and well looked after?	What would it look like if things went better? What would there be more of/less of?	What could get in the way of things getting better? What has been tried before that didn't work?	What else needs to happen to keep the children safe and well looked after? Who will do what by when?



PARALLEL PROCESS

When two or more systems – whether these consist of individuals, groups or organizations – have significant relationships with one another, they tend to develop similar:

The diagram consists of three overlapping blue circles. The left circle is labeled 'Feelings', the middle circle is labeled 'Behaviours', and the right circle is labeled 'Thoughts'. All three circles overlap in a central area.

Relationship based practice affirmed - CAFSOS findings

Where Child Protection and Family Services respondents reported that services have responded positively to requests for assistance they are **400 per cent more likely** to perceive an improvement in their parenting skills, than those who had not.

This result affirms the BICPM approach which repeatedly stresses the importance of case work which is **respectful, responsive to practical needs and emotionally intelligent**.

PARALLEL PROCESS

The diagram features three vertical blue rectangular boxes arranged horizontally. The first box on the left contains the text: 'The organisation is a living growing changing system with its own changing biology .'. The middle box contains: 'It is therefore every bit as susceptible to stress, strain and trauma as the individuals who live and work in the organization.'. The third box on the right contains: 'Complex interactions between stressed clients, staff, organisations.'

Relationship based practice affirmed - CAFSOS findings

When Child Protection parents/carers had perceived that the child's most recent worker had given them the opportunity to **express their views about the service, and were made to feel welcome** when they visited the service, there was an associated **increased likelihood of the parent's or carer's engagement in improving parenting skills**.

Specifically they were **300 per cent more likely to attribute improvements in their parenting skills to the involvement of the services**.

This is an extraordinary affirmation of the relationship based approach promoted in the BICPM.

CAFSOS study

A survey based study which has produced detailed knowledge about the experience of Victorian families who use Child and Family services.

- 289 Child Protection participants all of whom were living at home and ninety eight per cent of survey respondents were the child's parent.
- 391 Out of Home Care Participants
- 293 Family Services participants.
- 120 participants were carers of Indigenous children, 57 of whom were indigenous carers themselves

Connecting with vulnerable families

- Practice needs to be strengths based and forensically astute, and be respectful and courteous at all times. (Miller 2007)
- The reason for involvement must be clearly understood by the family.
- Clear goals and outcomes need to be established in partnership with the family wherever possible, in relation to what needs to change for the child.
- Establish clear time lines and expectations with parents, other practitioners and services and extended family.

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